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JUNE 1981

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# **CHANDAMAMA**

## **AN ANNOUNCEMENT**

As our readers know only too well, we have always striven to see that they are happy about the contents or the price of their magazine. We have never shrugged the odds or the burden we had to bear and it has pained us greatly whenever we have had to pass on any share of our burden to our readers.

But there are moments when it cannot be helped. We are at such a moment today. The cost of all things necessary to produce the CHANDAMAMA has gone up. What pinches most is the price of the paper which has been increasing periodically in the recent years. Over and above that we now have also to pay a Customs Duty according to the latest budget. This makes it impossible to sustain the existing price level of the magazine. We are compelled to enhance the price of the CHANDAMAMA by twentyfive paise from the issue dated July, 1981. The single copy will cost Rs. 1-75. The Annual Subscription will be Rs. 21-00.

We hope our patrons would realise the situation and bear with the change. On our part we promise to serve them even more creatively.

—THE PUBLISHERS



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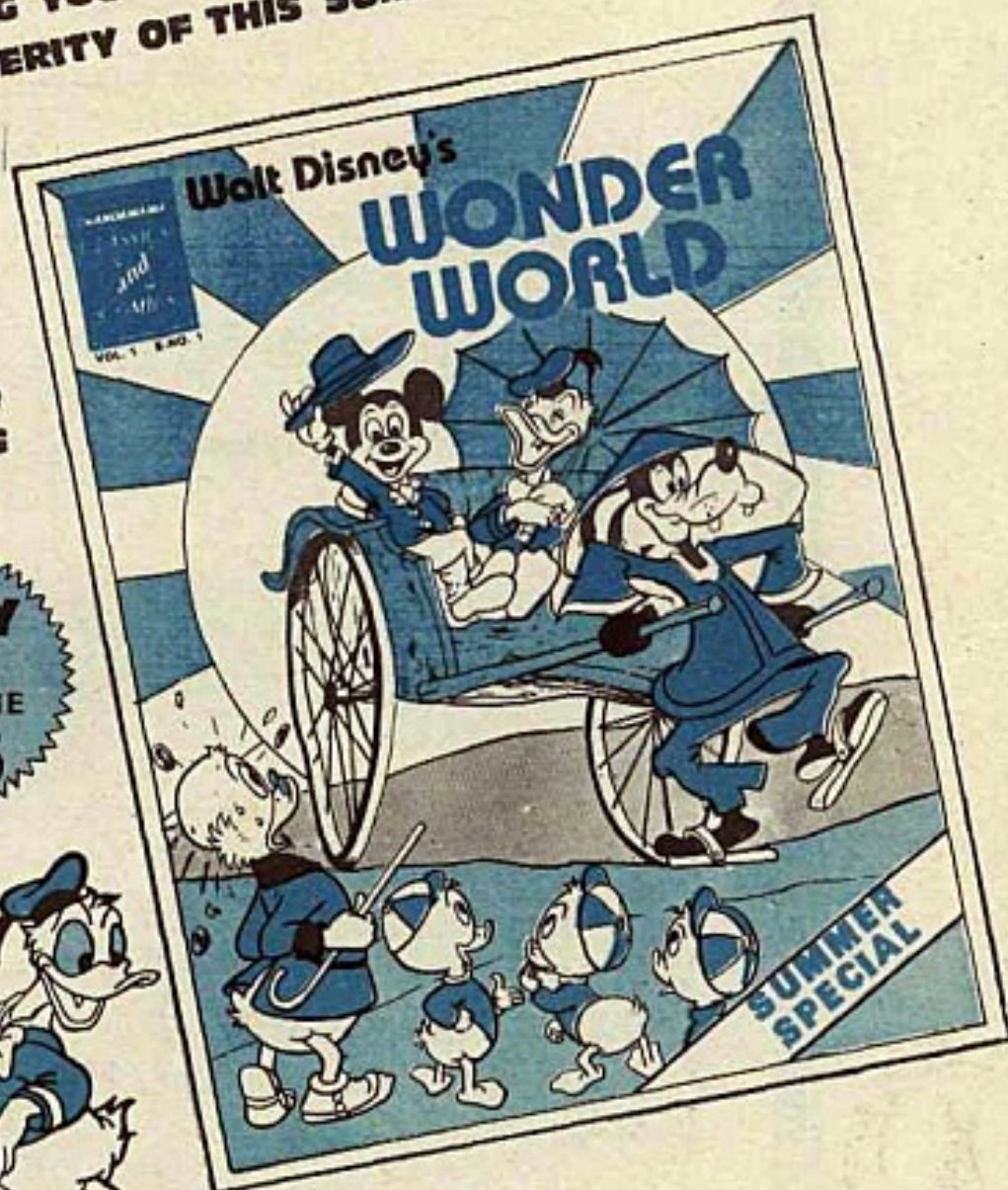
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PLUS SIX STORIES AND  
SEVEN OTHER FEATURES.

## GOLDEN WORDS OF YORE

यथा काष्ठं च काष्ठं च समेयातां महोदधौ ।

समेत्य च व्यपेयातां तद्वद् भूतसमागमः ॥

*Yathā kāṣṭhaṁ ca kāṣṭhaṁ ca sameyātāṁ mahodadhau  
Sametya ca vyapeyātāṁ tadvat bhūtasamāgamaḥ.*

As two logs floating in the ocean come together only to be carried in different directions the next moment, so do people meet (to part in no time).

— *The Hitopadeshah*





Controlling Editor: NAGI REDDI

## QUEST OF A SCHOLAR

Fourteen centuries ago travel from one country to another was not an easy task. Horses, camels, or elephants were the means of long travel against what we have today - cars, trains, and aeroplanes.

It required great determination to cross about five thousand kilometres, riding and walking through desolate mountain passes, zones infested by bandits, and long stretches of deserts and forests.

That is what Hiuen Tsang did. The interpretation of Buddhism that he heard in his own country, China, did not satisfy him. India was the home of the Buddha. India was the treasure-house of wisdom. He must visit India.

Despite his own emperor forbidding him to undertake the travel, he set out on the dangerous journey.

He travelled through India and studied at the University of Nalanda. He wrote down his Indian experiences in twelve parts and his book is an invaluable source of Indian history. On his return to China, he devoted himself translating the Buddhist books he had carried from India.

He sought no degree, title or reward. His quest was for the sake of truth. The quest itself was his reward.

The first part of the highlights of his life appears in this issue (see the Story of India); the second part would appear in the next issue of your magazine.



## Forecast for a Comet in 1983!

The sky of the Western Hemisphere about 100,000 kilometres above Earth, would be flashed by a comet that would outshine the aurora borealis or Halley's Comet. It will move at a speed of a million and half kilometres an hour. It will expand into glowing spheres, with tails flowing behind it for thousands of kilometres.

This fantastic light show will be a man-made one - launched by the United States and West Germany, by releasing a ball of gas through rockets. Its purpose is to study the behaviour of plasmas-ion clouds that flow through most of the Universe.



## Man's Best Friend Again

A north-Bohemian mountain resort in Czechoslovakia turns into a very difficult area in winter. Snowstorm continues for days. It becomes impossible for postmen to carry letters to different houses.

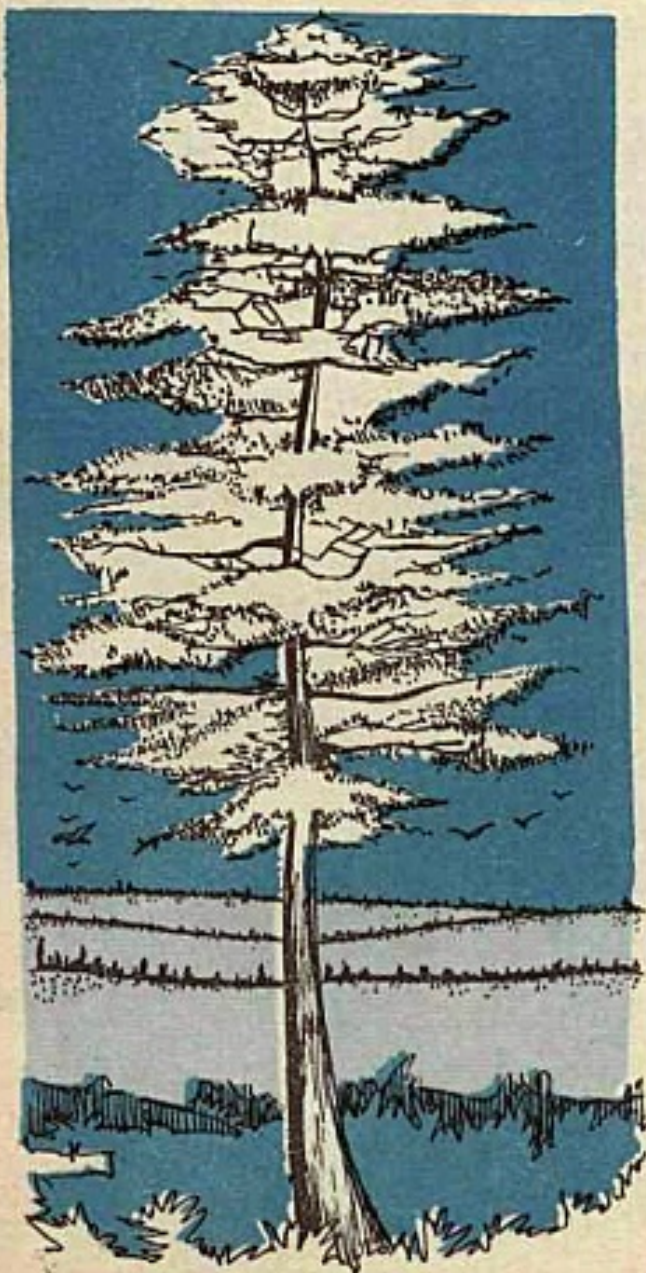
Who then would do the job? A squad of seven dogs! They brave the storm and deliver letters and parcels faithfully at their destinations.



Kapil Dev 77, stumps on the penultimate day. Having gained a first lead of 75, Kapil was a first day at 200 for Carlton. Saldhar himself beat him for the first time in his career. The scores were 75-3-8-628. Kapil D. at his one between Poona and M.S. was quite interesting. Poona points to 41, but it had a strong threat from a girls before winning 25 points (14-30) at half. Poona put up a splendid third quarter and reached the lee-way to just ahead of the participants. In the girls South Korea took beating Japan 18-10. South India qualified to second world championships to be held next.

## The Grand Old Pine

Deep in the south-west Mongolian valley stands a pine tree 893 years old. It is 25 metre high and it still produces seeds.



## A Miracle without Moses

You know how the sea parted, giving way to Moses and his followers on their way from Egypt to Israel. But a similar miracle took place recently in the sea that separates Korea and an isle called Mo-Do, three kilometres off the main land. 50,000 Koreans and tourists saw the wonder and caught fish, crabs etc. from the path opened through the sea for one and half hours.

The phenomenon was caused by tidal conditions.



## **THE LEGEND OF THE GOLDEN VALLEY** *By MANOJ DAS*

(Story so far: In the Golden Valley, an earthquake brings to light a wonderful golden image of beauty. The one to see it first is Raju. A voice tells him that he must go to the other side of a mysterious waterfall to learn the secret of bringing life to the statue. Leaving the image to the king's care, Raju crosses the waterfall and finds himself in the Land of the Holy Dragon. He kills the dragon in order to save the prince of the land, but is taken prisoner. The king, however, is grateful to him.)

### **5. PEOPLE WHO NEVER SMILED**

The king offered to show to Raju the many wonderful things they were doing. He led him up a zigzag staircase to the roof of the palace.

In a corner on the roof stood a dazzling white dome—with a large round patch of red on it. The king banged against it thrice. The patch disappeared revealing an entrance.

The king stepped in. Raju followed him.

"This is a very special dome. From inside this you can manage to see and hear what is going on in any remote area of our land. It would appear to be just the next door.

At a hint from the king, Raju looked out through a transparent part of the round wall.

What he saw was amazing. There spread out a town divided into several zones. Under blazing light hundreds of men and women were busy working,

though Raju failed to understand the nature of their work.

"What are they doing?" he asked.

"Not one but several things. We have dozens of projects. Look to the farthest left. There mathematicians are working on a formula by which it will be possible to make an exact count of the grains of sand in our country. Next....."

"But what's the use of such knowledge, any way?" Raju interrupted.

The king hemmed and hawed. "Well, knowledge is power. An item of knowledge preserved in our Knowledge-Bank might prove useful any moment. If you're not that interested in our several activities, let me draw your attention to our most ambitious project. Do you see that luminous tower? Experts working there are on the verge of inventing something great!" The



king paused.

"I'm so happy! With all the resources and discipline you command, you ought to try for something truly great. What is it, precisely, please?"

"In days to come," said the king proudly, "we can smash any of the stars in the sky!"

"How stupid! How wicked!" Raju blurted out.

"Stop!" the king showed his displeasure at Raju's comment.

"Why should I? Will you tell me what is your grievance against those twinkling little stars?"

"They are not so little, my boy, and their twinkle is not that innocent. We are being on our guard. The stars are gigantic planets perhaps inhabited by

very powerful people. They may one day attack us!"

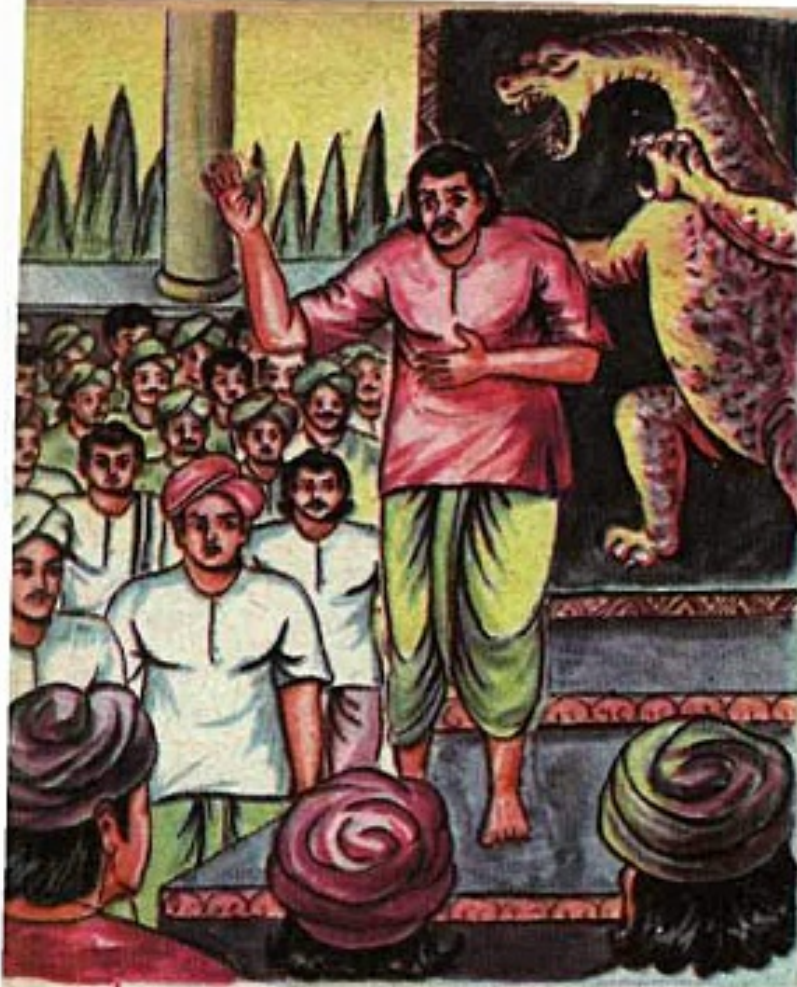
"Stupid and wicked, I repeat! How dare you waste the valuable human energy for such a senseless cause? Why should you not expect the people from the stars to come bringing with them a lot of love—should they care to come at all? Why should fear be the backbone of your endeavour?"

"What's the harm in nurturing fear? That keeps the people quiet and united!" said the king. He sounded rather timid.

"Is that kind of quiet and unity—some people huddled together for fear of bandits—worth anything? Why should you not let your people sleep at this hour?"







"Don't you worry on that count.. We have found means to make them forget sleep! And one who goes without sleep for a full decade is decorated with the Medal of the Dragon."

"Forget sleep? Does that not affect their health adversely?" asked Raju. Though this time he did not shout, his voice betrayed anguish.

"We have also hit upon a fine way to counter the effect of sleeplessness!" said the king, and with a slight manipulation he made another small part of the dome transparent.

"Now look into that hall. Our priest is about to conduct a weeping session for a batch of

workers."

Raju saw a sombre hall—with the dragon's figure—more terrible than the real dragon—painted on the wall. The hall was packed to capacity, but not a murmur was heard. People sat with heads hung.

The lunchbacked priest climbed the raised platform. "Citizens, you have heard all about the murder of our dear dragon. I need hardly say that the one who killed him is a demon that intruded in the guise of a man. He is no doubt set upon us by some unknown enemy. He is clever and cunning. He chose to kill the dragon when the dragon was quite legitimately about to gobble up the prince. The intruder meant to enlist the king's sympathy. But he is captured."

Raju, trembling with rage, turned to the king, "My lord, do you believe all that this liar says?"

The king did not speak, but he looked embarrassed.

"We will soon secure another dragon, a holier one," Raju heard the priest announcing.

"If the dragon is gone, let's do without it. Why another?" asked a man from the audience.

"We'd rather do without you!"



said the priest and he clapped his hands. Two guards rushed in and dragged the man away.

"Listen, citizens, you will soon enjoy a festival. That will be when we will arrange to kill the captured demon, the killer of our holy dragon, with due ceremony."

Raju looked at the king. The king nodded vehemently. "No, no, I'm not going to let him do that," he said.

"Thanks a lot, my lord. And is it not wicked of the priest to announce his decision about my fate without consulting you? My good king, why do you allow that devil of a man to override you?"

Before the king had answered, Raju's attention went away to the priest. "Now to our regular session," he told his audience. He remained silent for a moment and then burst into a wail. A few hundred voices imitated him, groaning, moaning, howling and caterwauling, tears rolling down their cheeks. Some of them stomped and swayed violently and tore their hair and even clothes. The noise grew louder by the minute.

Raju could not stand it. The king understood. He switched



off the show.

"The tension they get from sleeplessness is relaxed by this," explained the king.

"The whole scheme is so obnoxious, my lord! Should you not do everything possible to make your people smile rather than weep?"

"Make them what?" asked the king with some surprise.

"Smile, my lord!"

"What?"

"Smile, smile, smile!"

"What's that, exactly?"

"Good heavens! Don't you understand what is smile?"

Raju's question only further embarrassed the king. By and by an amazing fact was revealed





to Raju. The people in the Land of the Holy Dragon never smiled!

He wished he could smile and show to the king what it is. But he could not.

"My lord, you and your subjects are just unfortunate despite all your achievements. Obviously you are under a curse. Were I the king, I would gladly barter away all I had for the capacity to smile—indeed all I had—including the power to smash the stars! How much I wish I could undo the curse!"

There was a sincerity in Raju's speech that charmed the king. He looked on speechless.

Just then an orange light

flashed atop one of the towers and a bell was heard.

"This means a new invention has just matured. It is the Mind-Mirror, I believe," said the king.

They came out of the dome. The entrance disappeared as smoothly as it had appeared.

Some swift foot-steps were heard. The king asked Raju to hide behind the dome.

"Your Majesty, the Mind-Mirror is ready. Here it is! Pardon our impatience."

Two men looking wild with excitement held out before the king the framed mirror that remained covered. "You are to whisper a person's name into it and remember his figure and wipe the mirror thrice and look into it. What would be reflected in the mirror is what the person has been lately thinking in relation to you," they said.

"I'm so happy with your achievement, my brilliant scholars! Let us begin with an auspicious person. Let me see in it the mind of our greatest well-wisher, the priest," said the king. He received the mirror and was about to remove its cover.

"Stop!"

The priest had materialised



before them.

"I am to uncover the Mind-Mirror and it is to be in my custody," he uttered assertively.

The king looked indecisive.

"My lord, don't forget that you're the king. It is your privilege to use it. I suggest, please find out how kind the priest is towards you!" shouted Raju, emerging from his hiding. "Do it quickly," he added.

"No! No!! No!!!" cried out the priest. He hurtled towards the king and threw out his hands to grab the mirror. Raju jumped forward and pushed him back. They were locked in a wrestle.

The king uncovered the mirror. The two scholars eagerly showed him what he should do.

Something most unexpected happened the next moment.

The king dropped the mirror—it did not break though—and unsheathed his sword. There was a lightning movement and a swish! The priest lay sprawled, his head rolling off his trunk.

"My lord, what did you do?" asked Raju in horror.

"Indeed, what did I do?" asked the king himself, hurling his blood-stained sword and wiping his forehead.

By and by he collected himself. "When I looked into the mirror, I saw the priest, snarling and gnashing his teeth, rushing upon me with a dagger. I forgot that what I saw was a vision. I acted as if in self-defence!" he explained with some regret.

"This means, my lord, that the priest had been thinking of destroying you!" said one of the scholars.

— To Continue





## REVOLUTIONARIES IN LONDON

A shock-wave passed over the city of London on 1st July, 1909. A meeting of the National Indian Association at the Imperial Institute ended with a cultural show. While those who attended it were descending the staircase, a few shots were heard.

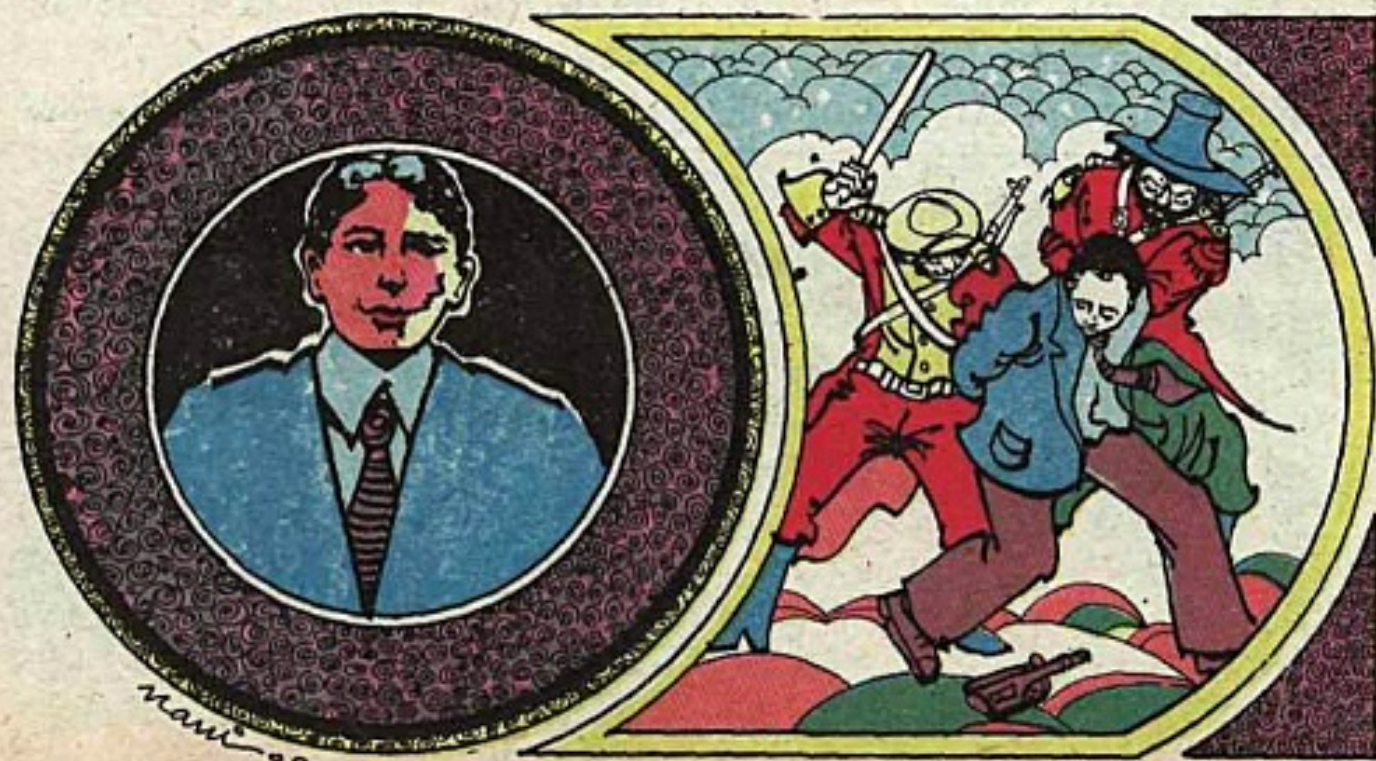
The one to fall was Col. William Curzon Wyllie, an officer notorious among the Indians for watching and reporting their activities.

The one to kill Curzon Wyllie was Madan Lal Dhingra, Who had studied at the University College of Engineering. He

declared that what he had done was only an act of "humble revenge for the inhuman hangings and transportation of patriotic Indian youths."

For some years the British Government knew that London, the very capital of their Empire, had become a haunt of the revolutionaries. But they were surprised at such an open manifestation of the rebellious spirit.

Madan Lal was captured. The police did their best to extract from him the names of his compatriots. To such efforts Madan Lal's reply was: "In





this attempt I have consulted none but my conscience. I have conspired with none but my own duty. I believe that a nation held down by foreign bayonets is in a perpetual state of war. Since open battle is rendered impossible to a disarmed race, I attacked by surprise..."

Madan Lal died on the gallows in London on August 17, 1909.

\* \* \*

Many Indians living in London were suspected of complicity in the revolutionary plan to liberate India. They were harassed. One to be harassed most was Vinayak Damodar Savarkar. An able student, he had already obtained his law degree, but was not allowed to practise. "You will be called to the Bar if you give an undertaking that you will never participate in politics"—he was told.

He refused to give any such undertaking.

In fact, the British were not wrong in suspecting him. He had gone over to London with the sole purpose of promoting the Indian freedom movement. The renowned patriot, Shyamji Krishna Verma, had granted him a scholarship for his study



in London—and for championing the cause of the country.

Savarkar was doing his work untiringly—organising secret meetings, recruiting volunteers, and raising funds. A long careful watch by the police made it possible for them to get a warrant issued against him.

He was then in Paris. But he bravely came over to London when he learnt that his friends were being persecuted there.

In the meanwhile Savarkar had written his immortal work—1857—the history of the first Indian uprising against the British rule. The book had been immediately banned. But



its copies continued to circulate secretly.

Officers of the Scotland Yard arrested him in March 1910. He was packed back to India by a steamer, S.S. Morea. Like a dreaded tiger he was put in a cage and the cage was kept in a dark cabin.

The steamer was off the port of Marseilles. A member of the crew suddenly spotted a pair of arms beating against the waves towards the shore.

He smelled a rat! He peeped into the cage. It was empty. Through a port-hole the prisoner had escaped!

An alarm was raised. The British guards boarded motor-boats and pursued the swimmer.

The swimmer proved more speedy! He reached the shore and ran. His friends, V.V.S. Ayer and Madame Cama, were to expect him there, ready with a car. But they had been a bit late.

Even then the British guards had no authority to arrest Savarkar on the French soil. But they bribed the local police and silenced them. A whole force of French and British guards ran after Savarkar.

He was caught and brought to India. He was transported to the Andamans. He was released in 1924.

Savarkar—popularly hailed as Veer Savarkar—lived an eventful life till a ripe age.





# SHIPWRECKED!

Long long ago there lived a prosperous merchant in Israel. On his death-bed he told his son, "Make it a point to pay back whatever I owe to others."

The son took a solemn oath to pay back all his father's debts.

It so happened that a wicked fellow overheard the conversation between the father and the son. Soon after the father had closed his eyes for good, the fellow told his son, "Your father owed me ten thousand rupees!"

The young merchant had no

means of knowing whether the fellow spoke true or not. But to be truthful to his father, he paid the fellow the money he demanded.

The father owed very little to very few. But inspired by the wicked man's example, people lined up to meet the young merchant to present their false claims.

The young merchant understood that he was being exploited by dishonest people. But he went on meeting their demands without a murmur. Soon







he found himself left with nothing. He had to sell his house too.

However, he still possessed his father's ship. "If I live here, people will never stop pestering me. Let us sail for some distant land. We can sell the ship. With the money we get, we can make a fresh living," he told his wife.

He had two little sons. The four set out for some distant port.

In the high seas the ship faced a terrible storm. Waves grew unruly. Wind tore the sails to shreds. Soon a wave as high as a hill lifted the ship to the height

of a palm tree and then brought it crushing down. The ship fell into pieces.

The merchant could not keep his wife and his sons together. They drifted apart.

The merchant resting on a plank was tossed onto an island. He wept over the fate of his family and then addressed his prayers to God, leaving them to His care.

He roamed about on the island. He found the land extremely fertile. It abounded in a variety of fruits and flowers. There were rivers and springs with sweet waters. But he did not see a single soul.

At night he took abode in a cave. He dreamt of a tunnel that was filled with gold and diamond. He woke up in the morning to discover that the cave itself led to a tunnel and that the tunnel was full of wealth.

Next day a large ship anchored there. The passengers were the inhabitants of another island. A famine had visited that island. That is why they had deserted it. But they did not know where to go.

The merchant invited them to settle down there. He selected some of them and asked them



to sail to Israel for buying grain. He gave them enough gold.

He also started cultivation on the island. Soon more people came to settle down there. He was kind to all and gave each one suitable work. Needless to say, he was the acknowledged king of the island. He made a regular harbour where he had landed. Ships came there for rest and for gathering provision.

Years passed. One day a young man met the king and offered his services to him. The king found the young man quite brilliant. He made him a member of his personal staff.

Soon thereafter another young man too joined his staff.

The king liked both of them very much. But as a principle he never asked anybody of his past, for his own past was so sad!

One day a merchant from another land met the king and offered to sell him some special kinds of herbs. The king was interested in them. He asked the merchant to spend the night with him so that he could learn from him more about the herbs.

"My lord, there is reason for my returning to my ship to spend the night there," said the merchant.

"May I know what the reason is?" asked the king.





"There is a holy woman in the ship. I look upon her as my sister. It is since her coming to live in my ship that I began to prosper. She lives with me on condition that nobody should insult her in any way," said the merchant.

"Don't you worry. I shall send two of my most trusted officers to stand guard over her," said the king. He sent those two young members of his personal staff to the ship.

The two young men strolled on the deck. One of them said to the other, "I am feeling sleepy. If you tell me a story, that will keep me awake."

"I know hardly any story

apart from the story of my life," said the other. He then narrated how, when very young, he boarded a ship with his parents and another brother and how shipwreck separated them and how he was luckily rescued by a boat.

"Do you remember your father's name?" asked the other young man who was listening to the story with bated breath.

"Of course I do!" said the first young man and he uttered the name.

The second young man gave out a cry of joy and jumped to the other's arms and exclaimed, "Here am I—your lost brother!"

The two brothers shed tears





of joy as they recounted the faint memory of their childhood. The night passed for them happily. In the morning they saw the merchant returning to the ship. "We now leave!" they said addressing the woman whom they guarded but whom they did not see. She was in the ship's main cabin.

Two hours later the merchant was back in the king's court, followed by the woman in veil. "My lord," he said, "this woman whom I had rescued from the sea and whom I revere like an angel has something to demand of those two young men who stood guard over her at night."

The two brothers were summoned. "I demand of them that they repeat their last night's conversation," said the woman.

The two brothers narrated how they had come to recognise each other last night—and spoke out their father's name.

The king jumped off his throne and hugged them. "My sons!" he exclaimed.

"My sons!" exclaimed another voice. It was the woman's. She had shed her veil. The king's amazement was so great that he could not speak for a long time.

The island went festive for days together to celebrate the reunion of the blessed family.







## THE RAIN PROVED HELPFUL

It was a rainy night. Three men had found shelter in an inn outside the town.

Although they had reached there separately, the inn-keeper gave them one room to spend their night.

In the light of the earthen lamp they recognised one another and smiled. They had spent a period together in jail, accused of different crimes.

"I don't feel sleepy. There is no sign of the rain and wind subsiding. But I have no regret; I've done my night's job," said the first one, Ramapati. It was past midnight.

"Well, we too are not dying to sleep! Why don't you give us an account of your adventure?" asked the second and third inmates of the cabin—Bhupati and Lalsingh.

"I can tell you the story, but

its conclusion may not be quite pleasant. In the evening I was singing, standing under a tree. A landlord was passing by. He sent his servant who dragged me into his carriage. The landlord wanted to enjoy my singing at his home. He had just left his wife at her father's place and was feeling lonely. I went with him and sang to his heart's content. I decamped with some of his valuables when he fell asleep," said Ramapati.

"What is unpleasant about the end?" asked Lalsingh.

"Nothing much. When I was talking to the inn-keeper, Bhupati took away my bundle containing those valuables which I am obliged to recover from him!" said Ramapati and he found his bundle in Bhupati's bag.

"Take back your bundle,

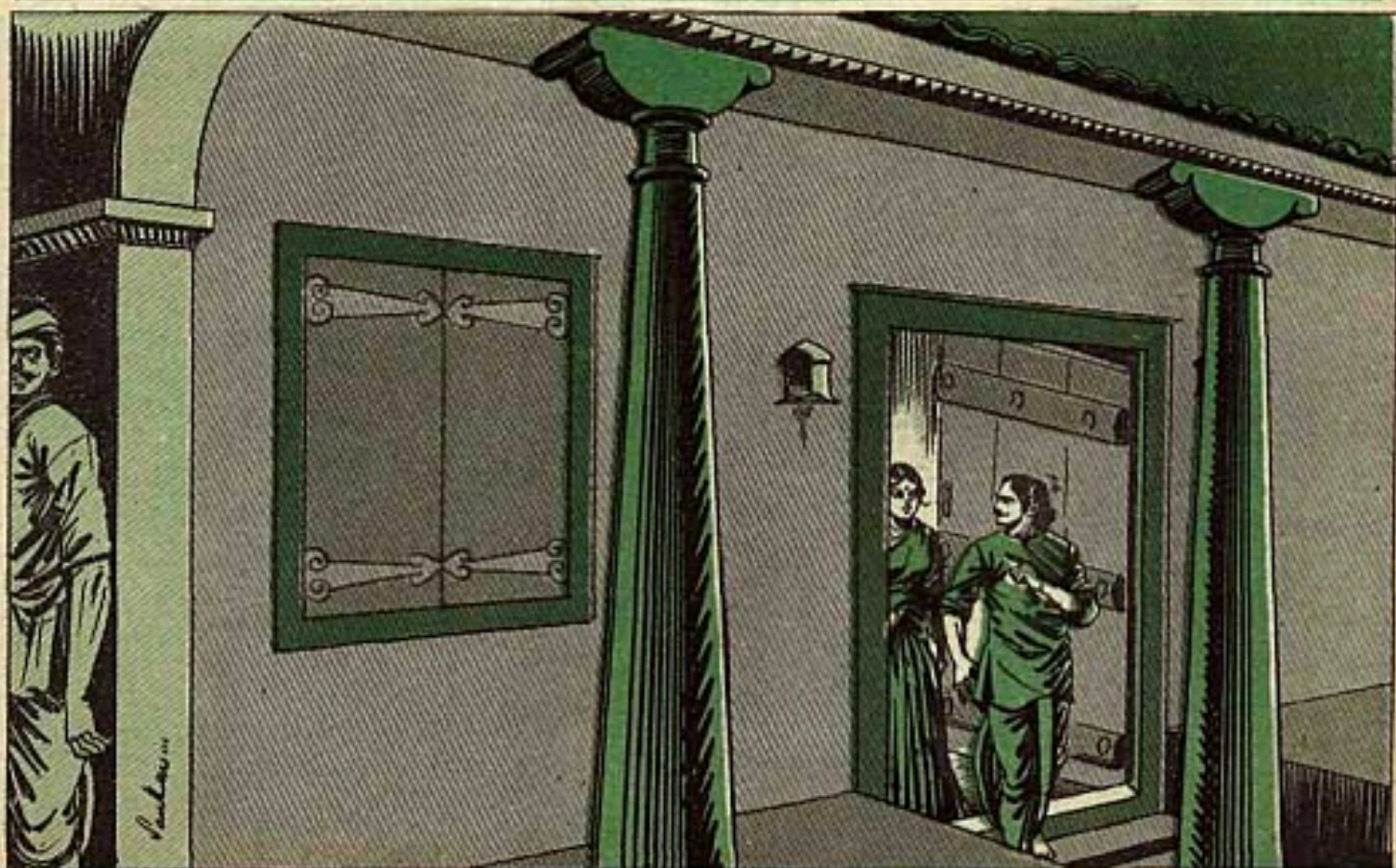


brother, I would not have stolen it had I recognised you by then!" said an embarrassed Bhupati. "I have no regrets, for I too have done my work for the night!" he added.

"What was that?" asked Ramapati.

"It had just begun raining in the evening. I had taken shelter under the porch of a merchant. I heard the merchant's mother telling him, 'My son, let's go to listen to the discourse on the Ramayana in the temple.' The son replied, 'Mother, it is raining. I have received a consignment of gold. Would it be wise to leave home?' To

this his mother said, 'My boy, no worldly wealth should be considered more valuable than a chance to be lost in the memory of Rama for a while.' At that the son yielded. They locked the house and went out. I lost no time in breaking open the lock. The neighbours heard no noise because of the rain. I found the casket containing gold without much difficulty. Of course, I lost it only two hours ago, while I was drinking water. But it has not gone far. It is in Lalsingh's baggage. I have no doubt that my friend would be good enough to restore it to





me," concluded Bhupati.

"Why not, it is yours, after all!" said Lalsingh and he returned the casket to Bhupati.

"Rain also came to my help," said Lalsingh thereafter. As I stood on the verandah of a teacher's house I heard his newly married wife telling him, 'Must you go for playing cards with the neighbours? I am afraid to be left alone in such a night.' Said the teacher, 'I shall just go and excuse myself from the game. Do not lock the door from inside; I shall be back in fifteen minutes.' As soon as he left I entered the house and gagged the woman and took out her ornaments. My operation was over in ten minutes. In another minute I shall get back the ornaments which Ramapati has managed to take away while I

was enjoying a puff at the inn-keeper's *hookah*." He then recovered his bundle from a blushing Ramapati.

"Rain has done good to all of us. It also brought us together after a long time," they agreed.

"Yes, the rain has also done good to us. Our work has been easy. But for the rain you would not be here together, exchanging notes," said a voice from the other side of the window. The three looked and, to their horror, recognised the face. It was that of a police officer.

They tried to escape. The officer laughed. "The room is locked. Why do you want to separate, if you were so happy to come together after a long time? I assure you, we will let you remain together for a much longer time—in jail."







*New Tales of King Vikram  
and the Vampire*

## TWO BRIGANDS

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time and flashes of lightning revealed fearful faces. Eerie laughter of the spirits got mixed up with the howl of jackals.

But King Vikram swerved not. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought the corpse down. When he began crossing the cremation ground, the vampire that possessed the corpse said, "O King, I know not what inspired you to undertake such a dangerous task. I hope, you have not erred. It cannot be said that a king never errs in his judgement or decision. Let me explain my point with an example. Listen to me. That might bring some relief to you."

The vampire went on: King Jnanashil, soon after ascending the throne, found that the whole kingdom was in chaos. The officials refused to work for the





to book. The two brigands were Rajvir and Gambhir.

The two brigands sometimes worked together, but often they worked independently. The rich were their targets. They plundered shops and houses with skill and swiftness. They distributed at least the greater part of their booty among the poor.

"Your Highness, I'm afraid, the people are not cooperating with the police in catching the brigands. Let's announce a handsome reward for those who would be able to catch one or both of them. I'm sure, that would serve the purpose," the minister told the king.

The king nodded, but said nothing.

At night the king donned a disguise and was out in the streets. A few of his most trusted and smart officers also roamed about, alert to come to the king's rescue if need arose.

In a month's time the king could develop a fair idea of the way the brigands worked. Once he observed that both of them spent an hour surveying a merchant's mansion. Next day he kept a number of his guards in hiding around and inside the mansion.

As anticipated by the king,

public unless bribed. When they did work, they did so without any sincerity. They fought among themselves at the cost of the interest of the public.

The king at once began his drive against corruption. He dismissed and punished officials who were either inefficient or mischievous. Soon the atmosphere changed. The people cooperated with the king in everything. After many years there was peace in the kingdom.

But the king was not quite in peace. It was because he found his police incapable of catching two brigands, though they brought petty thieves galore



the brigands struck the mansion at night. This time they could not escape. The king himself conducted the operation. Both Rajvir and Gambhir were caught.

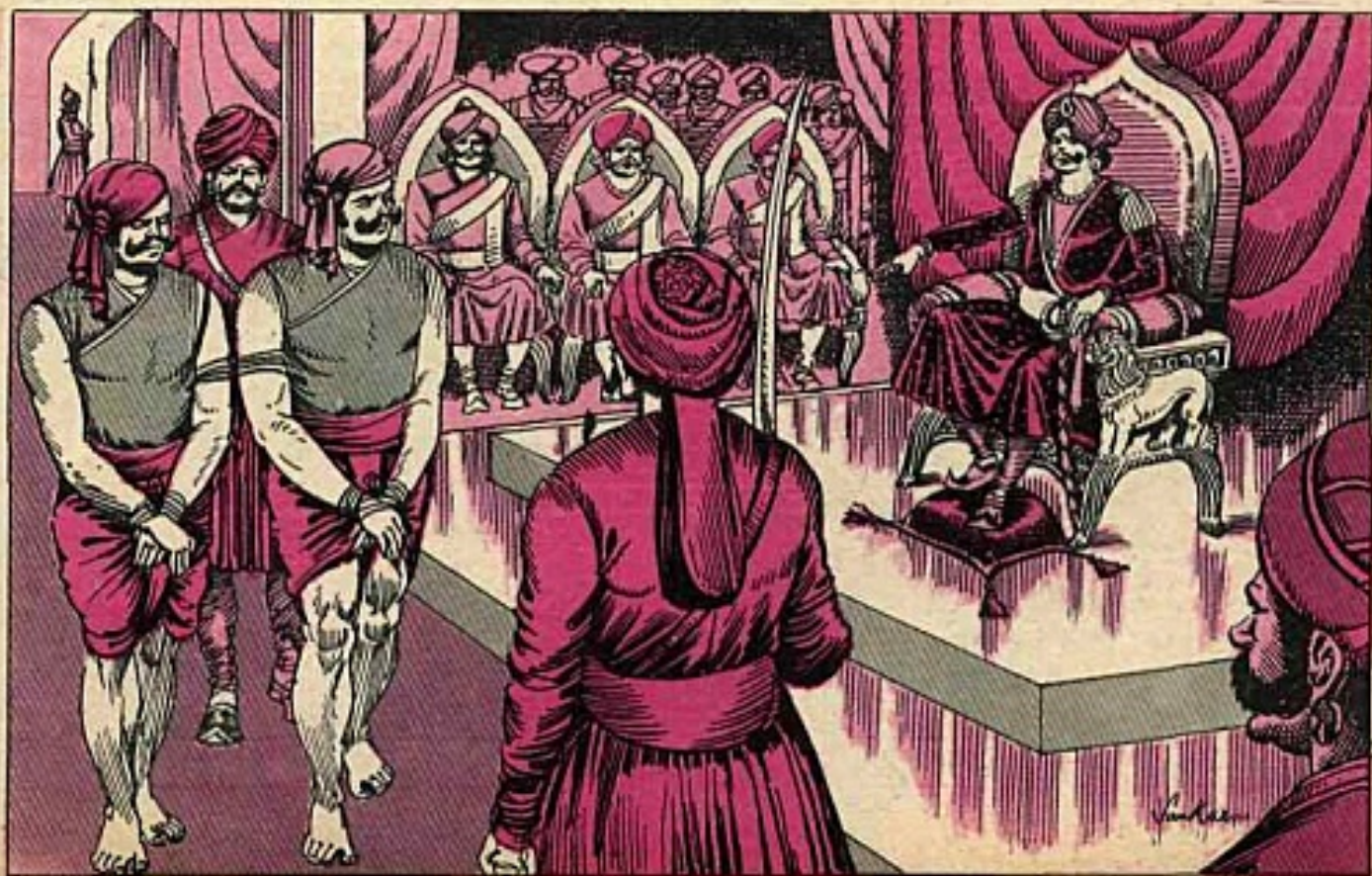
In the morning they were produced in the king's court.

Said Rajvir, "My lord, I confess that I have been a brigand for long. I took to this path at a time when there was chaos in the country. I should have given up my practice when stability returned to the land. But I carried on my activity by the force of habit. I deserve to be

punished. But it is entirely different with Gambhir. He has never spent a pie of his booty for his own comfort. He loots the rich only to distribute their wealth among the poor. He deserves to be pardoned."

All those who were present in the court were sure that the king who liked frank talk and who was doing his best for improving the lot of the poor would set Gambhir free. But the king ordered both to be thrown into gaol for the rest of their lives.

The vampire paused and then







demanding of King Vikram in a challenging tone: "O King! Why did the king not announce a reward for catching the brigands, as suggested by the minister? Why did he not pardon Gambhir despite the fact that the latter was for the poor? Answer my questions, if you can. Should you keep mum despite your knowledge of the answers, your head would roll off your shoulder!"

Answered King Vikram forthwith: "King Jnanashil was a wise man. He did not accept the minister's advice because he did not wish his subjects to

betray a man who did them good. But he punished Gambhir because he was a brigand primarily. It is the administration's duty, to suppress lawlessness. The task of removing the gap between the rich and the poor cannot be left to bandits and thieves. It must be done through social reform. Banditry will create an atmosphere of fear and encourage crime. There will be chaos again."

No sooner had the king concluded his answer than the vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.

## The Computer's Judgment

"Asked to choose the more efficient of two clocks, one of which was permanently running five minutes slow and one which did not go at all, a computer selected the second clock on the grounds that twice a day it showed the correct time whereas the first one was never right."

— *Unesco Features*



## Trot with Trappings!

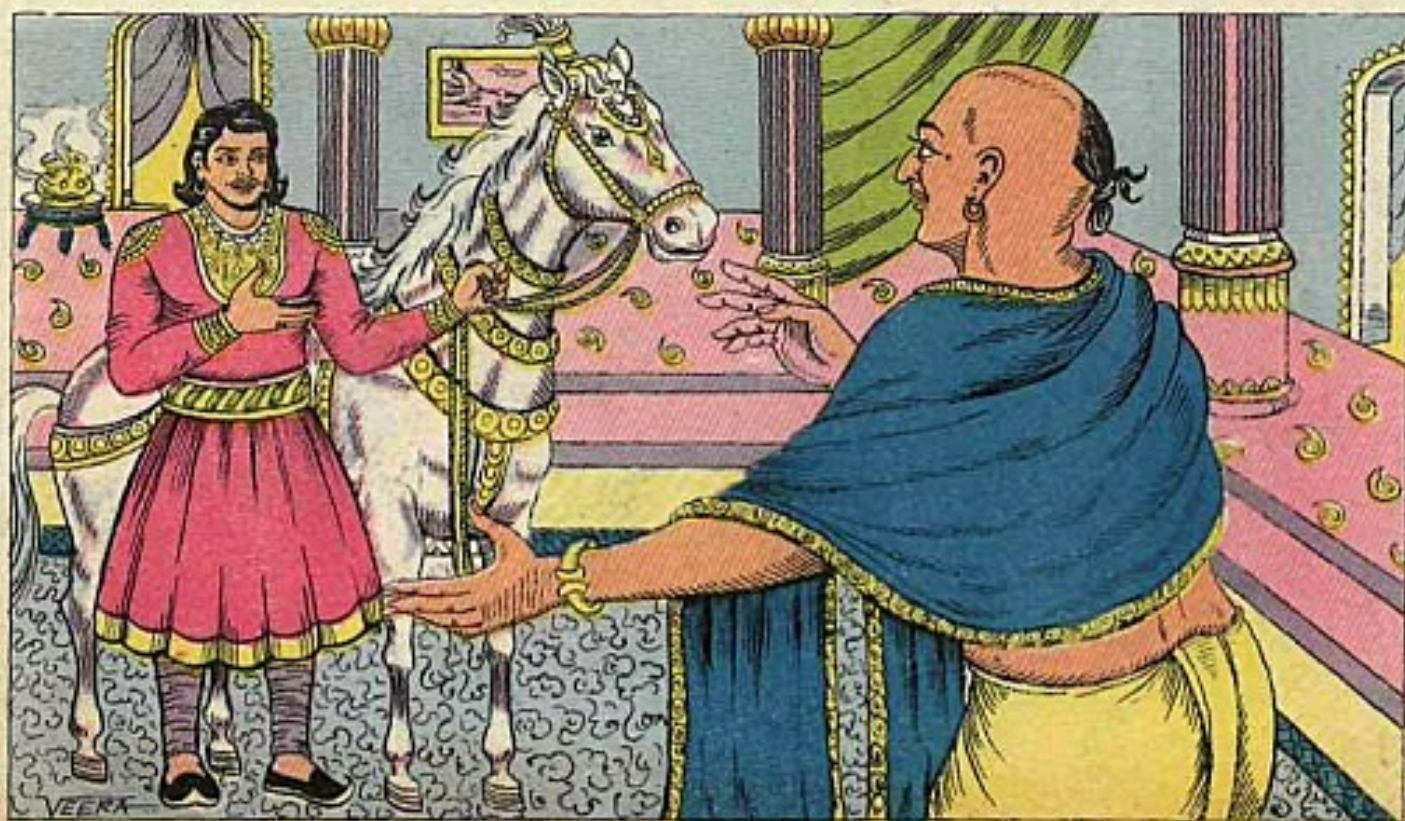
Once Bodhisattva had been born as the prince of Varanasi. He ascended the throne at a young age. The first thing he did as the king was to reward his teachers.

Among his teachers was an old Brahmin. The young king honoured him by giving him a charming horse. The horse was bedecked with all the trappings. It wore a gold crown and its seat too was fitted with gold ringlets.

The old Brahmin happily mounted the horse and trotted towards his home.

"How marvellous! How charming!!" exclaimed the people on the road. The Brahmin felt flattered. Never in his life had he attracted such public attention. He smiled and nodded at the people. The passers-by greeted him with smiles and salutations.

On reaching home he told his wife, "What a glorious





scene I made as I rode the horse. How the passers-by exclaimed their greetings and praise!"

The old man's wife—most probably a young lady who hated him—said, "My husband, hadn't those passers-by seen you so many times? Haven't they seen horses galore either? Did they beforehand feel so amazed with you or any of the horses? Why did they feel so amazed today?"

In his enthusiasm, the old Brahmin had not given any thought to such a question. He gaped without an answer.

"Well, it is neither yourself nor the horse that attracted

the people," observed the wife. "Then?"

"It is the golden trappings of the horse and its gait," explained she. "If you put on the trappings and trot like the horse yourself, the people would be even more amazed," she added.

The old Brahmin had been so much enamoured of public gaze that he put on the horse's trappings and was soon out on the road. People who saw him were more amused than amazed. But when the old fellow began trotting like a horse, their mirth burst into wild laughter, clapping of hands and catcalls. The traffic in the bazar came to





a standstill. "Thank God, is this fellow our king's teacher?" the serious-minded ones in the crowd were heard muttering.

An officer ran to the king and brought the teacher's funny behaviour to his notice. The king sent for the Brahmin. They stopped the prancing old man and led him into the court.

The momentary zeal of the old teacher had passed. He had begun to realise his foolishness. He stood before the king, his head hung. The king too felt embarrassed and let him go home without those gold trappings which he sent through a servant.

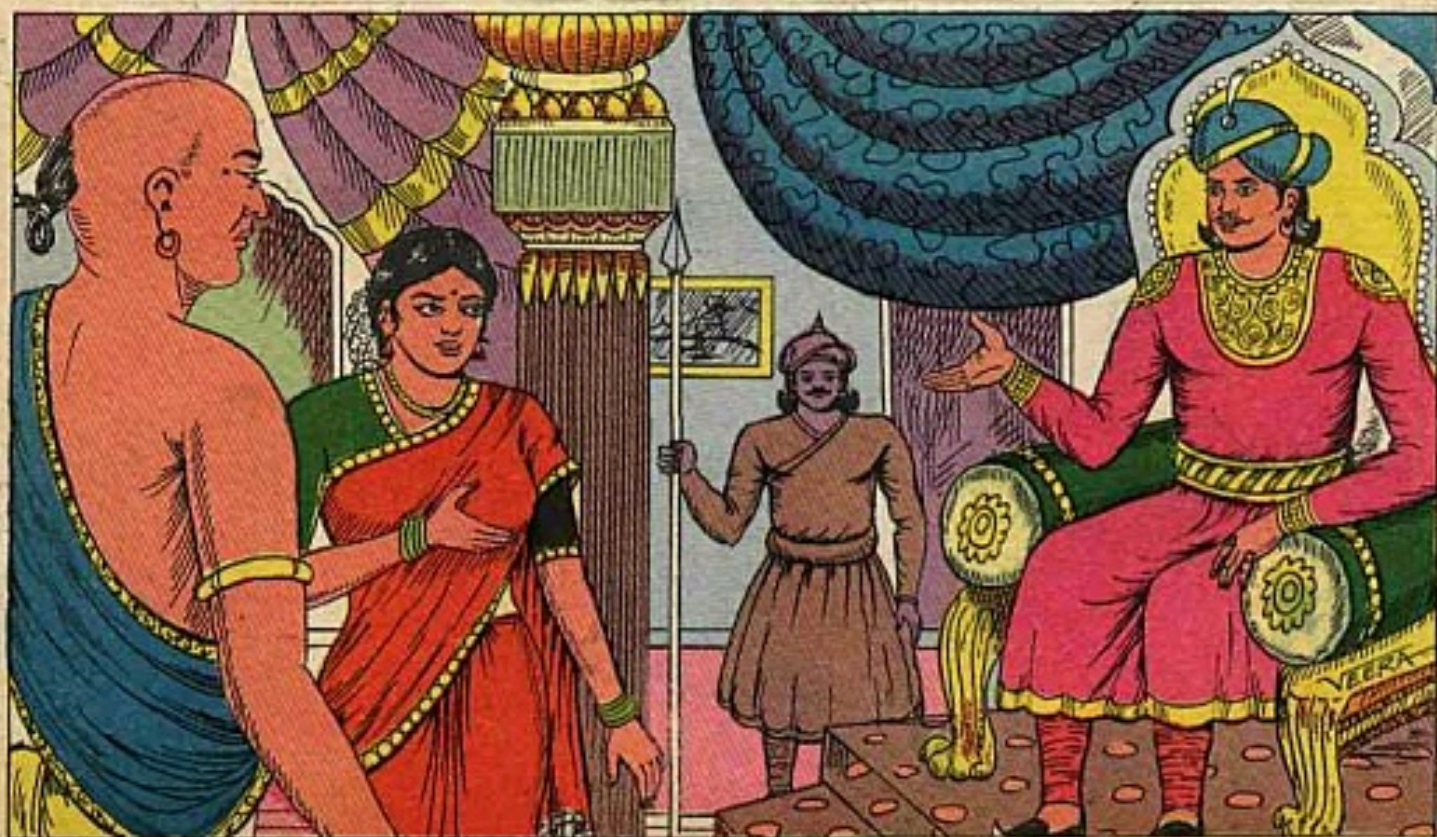
"It is my wife who misguided me!" the Brahmin murmured to himself. He grew quite angry with the lady.

The lady had anticipated this. She had slipped into Bodhisattva's palace.

The king, Bodhisattva, sent for the old Brahmin again and told him that he should not vent his anger on his wife. After all, his wife had only talked foolish. It was he who had done foolish!

The Brahmin agreed with the king's observation, but he had grown quite afraid of the lady. He won't take her home!

*From the Buddha Jatakas*





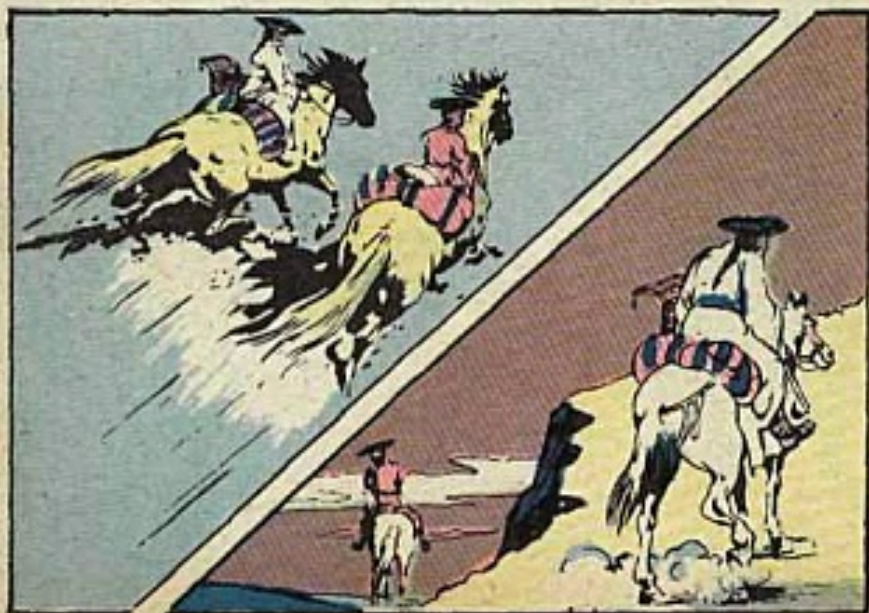


STORY OF INDIA - 54

## TRAVELS OF HIUEN TSANG (1)

This happened in the 7th century, in China. A royal announcement said that fourteen young monks were to be maintained at Government expense. Hundreds of candidates presented themselves. Among those selected was Hiuén Tsang, a boy of twelve.

The boy, Hiuén Tsang, grew up to be a great seeker. He was not happy with the way the monks of China explained Buddhism. He sought his emperor's permission to visit India, but was refused. Even then he started. Frontier guards attacked him.



He escaped by impressing the guards with his truthfulness. An old man gave him an old horse. A Buddhist volunteered to accompany him. But on the difficult way through the mountain pass, the companion abandoned him.





Through the desolate desert Hiuen Tsang rode on, all alone, finding his way by the help of skeletons of men and camels on the sand. The old horse led him to an oasis when he was dying for thirst.

He was most cordially received by the king of Turfan. The king accepted him as his guru and bestowed great attention on him. But the difficulty arose when the king would not allow him to proceed further.



Hiuen Tsang undertook a fast. When the king saw that his master would die if not allowed to go, he relented. Hiuen Tsang was on the road again, but this time escorted by guards supplied by his royal disciple. They left him at the Indian border.





At last Hiuen Tsang was in India. A cave near Nagarhar was famed to have preserved, permanently, the shadow of the Buddha. Hiuen Tsang entered it. Through his ardent prayer he got a luminous vision of the Buddha.

On his way to Prayag by boat he was captured by a gang of bandits. The bandits meant to sacrifice him to their deity, for he possessed all the qualities of an ideal offering. Hiuen Tsang's companions looked on helpless.



Hiuen Tsang was led to the altar of the deity. He prayed to the Buddha, saying that he should be able to carry his quest to his next life. He then told the bandits that he was ready and they could kill him.





Suddenly a storm and whirlwind broke out. Trees were uprooted. One of Hiuen Tsang's companions told the leader of the bandits that thunder would kill them all unless they set the holy traveller free at once.

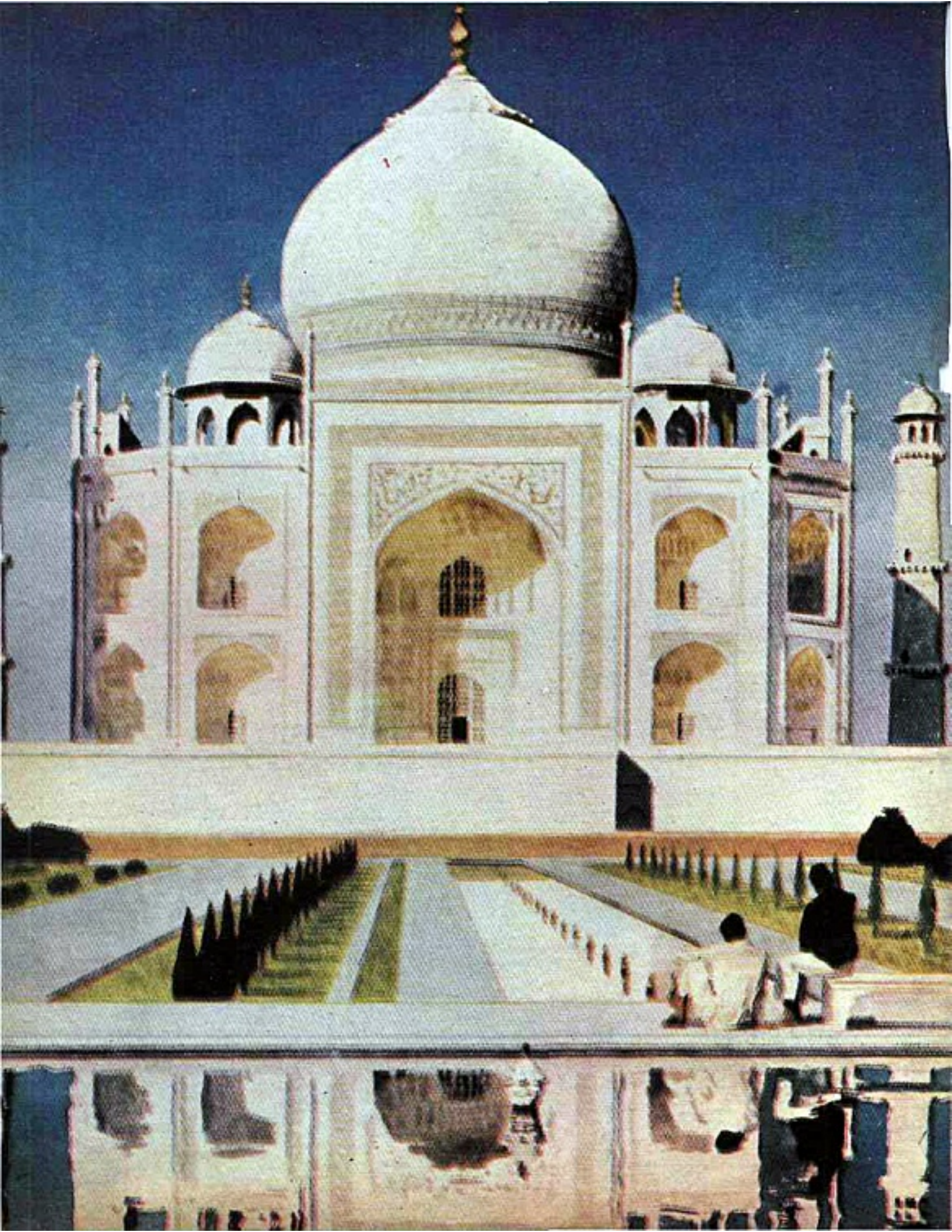
The bandits set Hiuen Tsang free and fell at his feet. Hiuen Tsang told them how despicable their practice was and that they cannot escape the consequence of their action and must suffer as they have made others suffer.



At Hiuen Tsang's bidding the bandits threw away their weapons into the waters of the Ganga. They promised to lead a peaceful life. Hiuen Tsang prayed for them and resumed his journey.

*(To conclude in the next issue)*







## **MAN-MADE MARVELS**

# **TOMB OF TREASURES**

*Sheets of gem-studded gold, a vast canopy of pearls, a priceless golden screen and a fortune in jewels were housed in the magnificent tomb!*

Ask anyone to name the world's most beautiful building and the answer will almost certainly be "the Taj Mahal", regardless of whether the person questioned has seen the building or not. The reason for this is that the Taj Mahal is one of the most photographed man-made wonders of the world.

The Taj has stood beside the River Yamuna, at Agra, for just over 300 years, the tomb of Queen Mumtaz Mahal. Her husband, the Moghul Emperor Shah Jahan, raised this incredible building to her memory.

India was then enjoying a time of unusual prosperity. Shah Jahan controlled his country's finances with his own hand. There was nobody to stop him spending a considerable proportion of his vast revenues

on things that delighted his eye. These included a million pounds' worth of fireworks and a fabulously expensive throne with two richly jewelled peacocks standing behind it.

His queen, whom he married in 1615, seems to have been a remarkable woman, widely renowned for her charity and common sense.

She died at the early age of 35 and left behind her an emperor so grief-stricken that it is said that his raven black hair turned grey within a month.

The task of building the Taj Mahal had been entrusted to a Persian architect, Ustad Isa. Ustad Isa recruited a work force of some 20,000 craftsmen, not only from India, Turkey and Persia, but from France and Italy as well. They laboured on



the emperor's mighty project for 22 long years before the last piece of marble was set in place.

The Taj Mahal was constructed with two bases, the first of red sandstone, the second a 95 metre square of black and white marble paving stones. A slender white minaret stands at each corner of this huge chess board, and in the centre towers the tomb itself, a facade of gently pointed Moghul arches enclosing a great, 57-metre-high central dome.

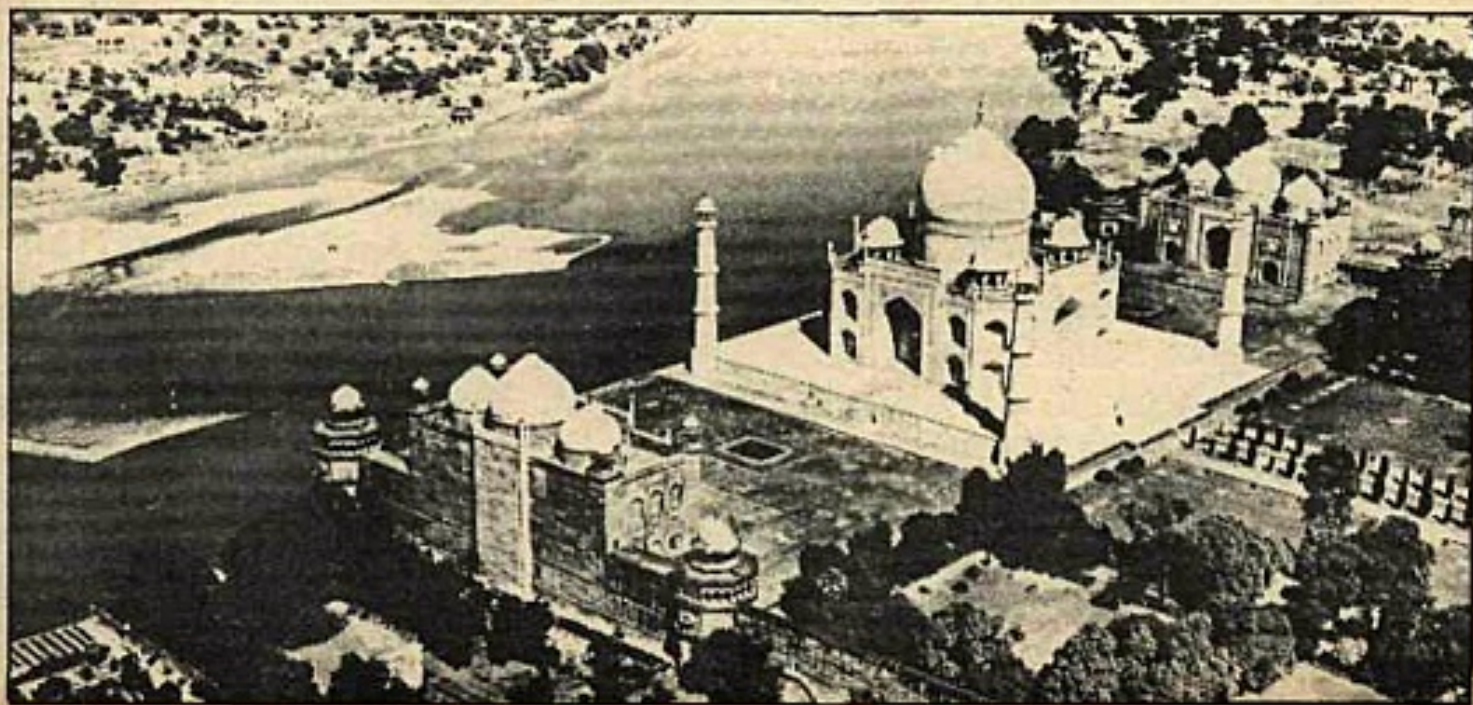
It is a mark of Ustad Isa's genius that he made sure that his masterpiece was set in such a way that it always produced the maximum dramatic effect.

Traditionally, the Taj should

be viewed by moonlight, when the whole building seems to float weightlessly, like a cloud, or just after sunset, when the huge mass of marble glows a delicate shade of pink.

### ***The Real Marvels***

The real marvels are to be found inside. Mumtaz Mahal is buried directly under the dome, with her emperor beside her. But to increase the visual impact, the tombs were originally enclosed within a barrier of gold, set with jewels. This was almost certainly the work of the French craftsman, Austin of Bordeaux, who is known to have spent many years in Shah Jahan's service.





The priceless golden screen has long vanished, as have the Taj's silver doors, which were torn off and melted down. Today, the tombs are surrounded by a two-metre high marble screen, carved into lace-like patterns from a single block of stone, which gives the crypt a cool elegance.

When the Taj Mahal was completed in 1652, both the ceilings and walls enclosing the tomb were lined with sheets of gem-studded gold while a vast canopy of pearls hung over the Queen. They too are gone leaving only the jewels that decorate the two coffins perhaps because the thieves could not believe that the stones were real.

The Islamic faith forbids the portrayal of humans, or even animals, in a religious building.

The Taj shows considerable Hindu influence, nevertheless it was built by a strict Mohammedan, so the only representations of living things within it are of flowers. In many cases these are built up from semiprecious stones. One flower, hardly more than two centimetres square, has 60 individual inlays, and is as smooth to the touch as a piece of glass.

In 1658 Shah Jahan was laid beside his Queen, which was at least an appropriate resting place for a man who had built one of the world's wonders in her memory.

Once a man was accused of treason and brought before Alexander the Great.

"You are to forfeit all your property," said Alexander.

"This is a mean judgement," commented the accused, "I must appeal against it."

Alexander laughed. "Appeal to whom? Am I not the supreme authority?" he asked.

"Against the judgement of Alexander the Small, I will appeal to Alexander the Great," answered the accused.

This, of course, is a story.





## FIRST THING FIRST

The king donned a disguise and was observing the condition of his subjects. But his mind was beset with a problem. The walls around his fort-city had crumbled. They required extensive repairs. A gang of bandits harassed the citizens. He ought to capture them.

He was not sure which of the two needs should have his attention first.

He saw a farmer erecting a fence around his field. But the field had much weeds along with the crop.

"Brother, why don't you remove the weeds first?" he asked the farmer.

"I can do that any time. But what if stray cattle enter my field? I must protect it first!" replied the farmer.

The conflict in the king's mind was resolved. He devoted his attention to strengthening the walls first.





## **A STRING OF TEMPLES ON THE SEA**

"Boys, today I shall be taking you to a place, not far from Madras, that was a famous port in bygone days. It was from there that Indians emigrated to South East Asia in early centuries. And we have some of our most excellent monuments there," said Mr. Sadasivam.

"A story book for the one who can guess the place," promised Shyam Gupta.

For a second Ravi and Raman looked at each other. Their eyes sparkled.

"Mahabalipuram!" they

spoke out simultaneously. "Now, you ought to give two story books for two of us!" they demanded.

They drove through cool countryside in a pleasant afternoon. The sun was mellow and the breeze never lost the sea-touch.

"Who was Mahabali after whom the place is named?" asked Ravi.

"Mahabali or Bali was a great king of the mythical times. He had grown so powerful that he feared none. He was proud—







and proud particularly of his philanthropy. There was nothing which he would not be able to give away when asked—he thought. That was because he owned the whole world and the heavens too.

“He was distributing alms on an auspicious day. So many Brahmins, sages and needy people returned satisfied with the gifts they got. At the close of the day there appeared a dwarf Brahmin. All he wanted was place enough to stand! Choose any place you like—said the king. The dwarf suddenly began to grow in size—and became unimaginably huge. One foot

of his covered the entire earth; the other one he set on heaven. To the king’s amazement, a third leg emerged from the Brahmin’s navel for which he needed yet another place!

“By then the king perhaps had known who that mysterious alm-seeker was. Humbly he showed his own head. The Brahmin placed his third leg on Bali’s head and pressed him down—down to the nether-world.

“The proud Bali was thus suppressed, but suppressed for his own good. He was a devotee of the Lord. Pride alone was his enemy. The Lord humbled him,” said Mr. Sadasivam.

“Was Mahabalipuram really the abode of King Bali?” asked Shyam Gupta.

“It is popularly said to be so. But if the belief is based only on the place’s name, then it is just an imagination. Mahabalipuram is so named not after King Bali. It is a variation of Mamallapuram—after Mamalla, the title of King Narasimha Varman I of the Pallava dynasty, who lived in the 7th century. Of course it is possible that the place was associated with the memory of the mythical Bali



even before it was called Mamallapuram," answered Mr. Sadasivam.

About sixty kilometres drive and they were at their destination. Sundown was not far; still the atmosphere was bright. The first thing that attracted their eyes was a huge rock sculpture, 96 feet long and 43 feet high—famous as "Arjuna's Penance". Imaginatively and artistically carved figures of gods, supernatural beings, human beings as well as animals numbering about a thousand could keep any sensitive mind absorbed for hours.

Mr. Sadasivam led the boys to the nearby cave temples and

the handsome monolithic monuments known as the Seven Pagodas though only five of them remained. The pagodas or as many see them as Chariots (*Rathas*) were perhaps built from their top to bottom—as masons must have started their work sitting on a hill, making the temples out of the hill itself.

There was then the magnificent Shore Temple, washed by the frolicsome waves.

"If you chose to visit Mahabalipuram again, choose a moonlit night for the trip. Against the blue waters glittering with gold, the Shore Temple looks like a sublime vision," said Mr. Sadasivam.







## This is Life!

Ramnath was a prosperous farmer. He and his forefathers had been giving their attention to cultivating rice, wheat, and a variety of vegetables. This they had been doing for generations.

No one in Ramnath's family had ever got any higher education. Ramnath sent his son, Somnath, to the college.

Somnath graduated successfully and came home.

"My son, it is time for you to take interest in farming," Ramnath told the young man.

"What! Is it for this that you gave me so much education?" Somnath asked with surprise.

"Education is meant for your culture and knowledge. So far as your vocation is concerned, it ought to be agriculture. In this I can pass on my ex-

perience to you," explained the father.

"Father, what happiness can I find in agriculture? If the crop fails, our condition would be miserable. Why not I do something to earn ready money?" asked Somnath.

Ramnath kept quiet. He said later, "I do not wish to impose my decision on you. Do what you like."

Somnath went to the town. He became the guest of a merchant, a friend of his father. He was enamoured of the merchant's wealth. "Business is happiness," he thought and, appreciating the elegant style of the merchant, said, "This is life!"

At night Somnath could not sleep well, because the merchant



who slept in the room next to his was tossing on his bed and swearing at times, all to himself.

"Don't you sleep peacefully?" Somnath asked the merchant in the morning.

"Peacefully? In this era of cut-throat competition offered by a host of dishonest traders how can I sleep peacefully?" the merchant asked in return.

Somnath felt sad. He went over to another friend of his father, an important officer in the king's court.

"Welcome!" shouted the officer beaming with joy. "I have not played chess for a full year. Come what may, I am going *to spend the whole day playing chess with you.*"

Somnath was good at chess. So was the officer. They sat down for playing.

"This is life!" Somnath

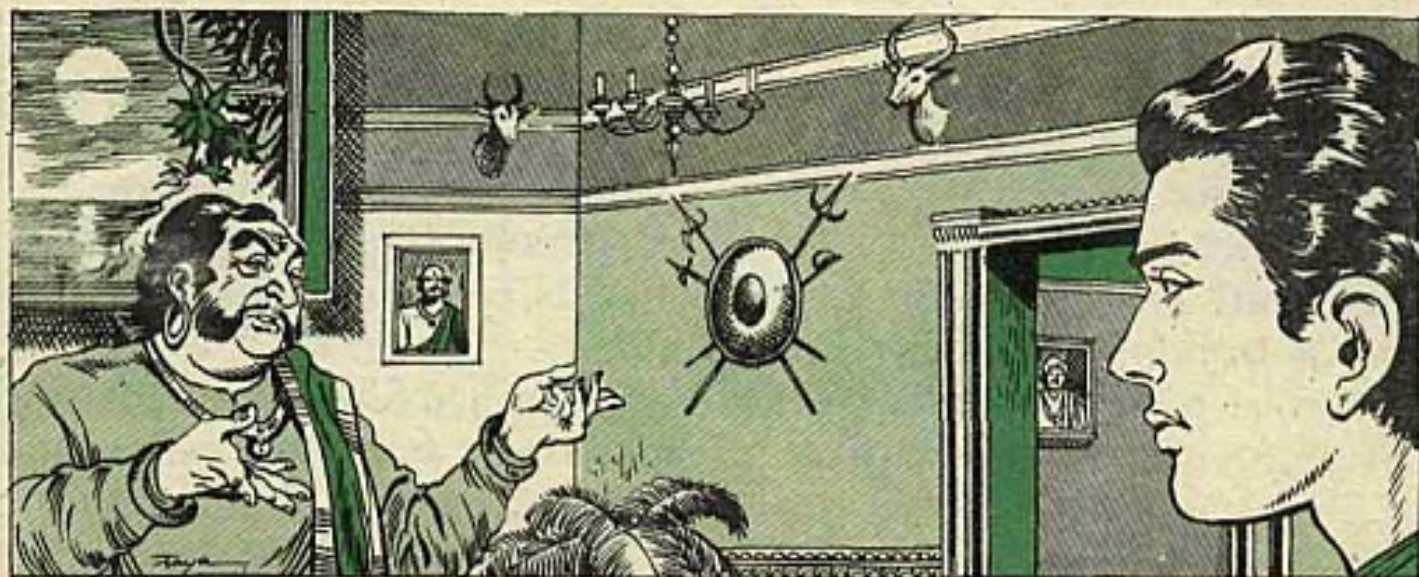
thought. "You attend to your work and receive your salary at the end of the month. No dependance on weather, no fear of competition."

They had just had their tea and had unfolded the chess-board when the officer saw a messenger at the door. His face grew pale. After a brief talk with the messenger, he told Somnath, "Sorry, boy, I've to rush to the court, can't say when I'd be free to return home."

"What if you don't go?" asked Somnath.

"You are so naive! Am I not the king's servant? He can take away not only my job but also *my head!*" replied the officer while on the move.

Somnath returned to his father. "Teach me agriculture, father," he said with a smile. "This is life!" he added.







## WHO WILL TAKE A GIFT?

Years ago there was a wealthy man of Chand Nagar named Shrikant.

He was so miserly that nobody could ever recollect having seen him giving a paisa to the needy. Imagine the surprise of his neighbours when, one morning, he called out to a Brahmin and requested him to accept a cow as a gift!

The Brahmin was stunned. "A cow being offered by Shrikant! Whoever had heard of such a change of heart!" he told himself.

"Well, Shrikant, why this sudden decision, please?" he asked aloud.

"How d'you ask such a question? Don't you know, being a Brahmin, that one earns religious merit by giving gifts to Brahmins?" replied Shrikant.

Even then the Brahmin smel-

led a rat. "I don't think that I deserve your gift," he said and he went away. To Shrikant's disgust, other Brahmins of the village too rejected the offer under some pretext or the other.

But Shrikant was bent on giving away the cow. Simple was the cause: the cow had perhaps consumed a poisonous plant and was dying. Shrikant was worried at the thought that he has to spend a rupee or two for disposing of the corpse. In a flash had come the idea to him: why not I give away the dying cow to a Brahmin? That would save me the expense. Over and above that, I'd earn the benefits due to a pious donor.

Just when Shrikant had begun to despair as no Brahmin of his village would take his gift, his



eyes fell on a traveller—a Brahmin from a distant village.

"O holy man, will you please accept a cow as a gift?" he asked.

"Why not? But I am out to perform a ceremony in the next village. I shall be happy to receive the gift on my way back home—after two hours," said the traveller.

"But just now we are passing through an auspicious hour. Will you accept the gift now in principle? You can take possession of the cow later," proposed Shrikant.

The Brahmin found nothing amiss in the proposal. He

touched his sacred thread, recited a hymn, and declared that he accepted the gift.

Shrikant thanked him.

Two hours later the Brahmin was back. "Where is my cow?" he asked.

"There," said Shrikant, pointing out the dying cow in the shed.

The Brahmin was surprised. "Am I required to treat the cow? I thought you wanted me to take a cow!" he said.

"Take that cow, by all means!"

"You must have had some other cow in your mind, not this dying cow!" observed the







Brahmin.

"This is the cow I had in mind. You have accepted this, touching your sacred thread. Take it away immediately," shouted Shrikant.

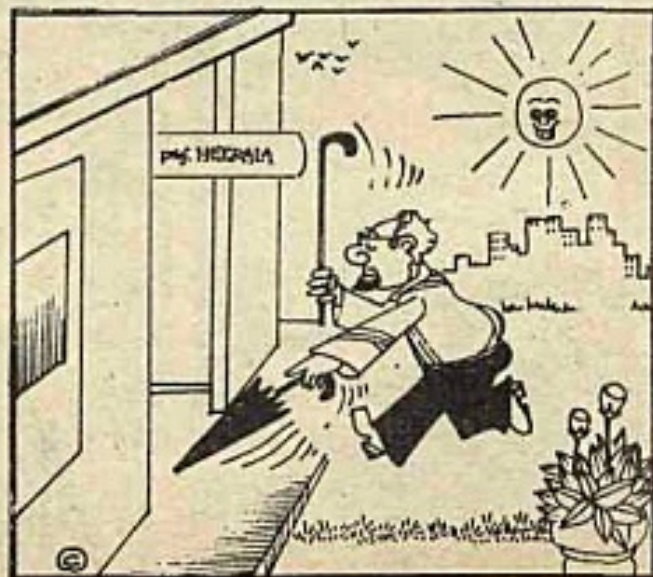
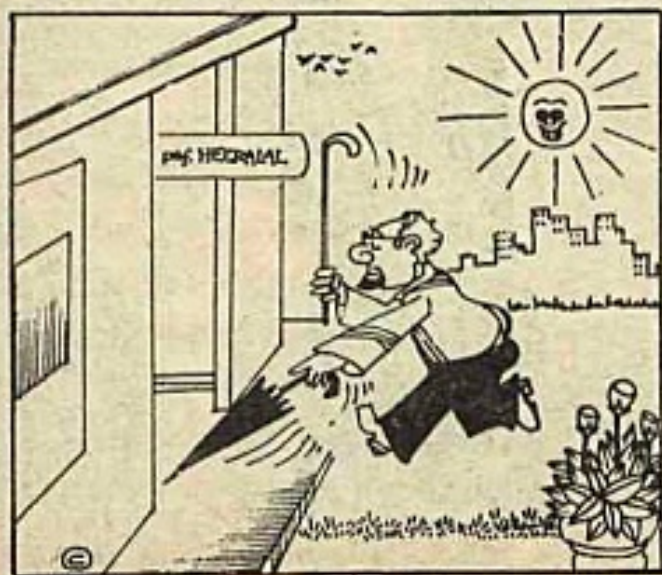
The Brahmin understood what was in Shrikant's mind. He smiled. What Shrikant did not know was that the Brahmin was a renowned physician for cattle. He collected a few herbs from

the nearby bushes and sat down to nurse the cow. In two hours the cow stood up as vigorous as ever.

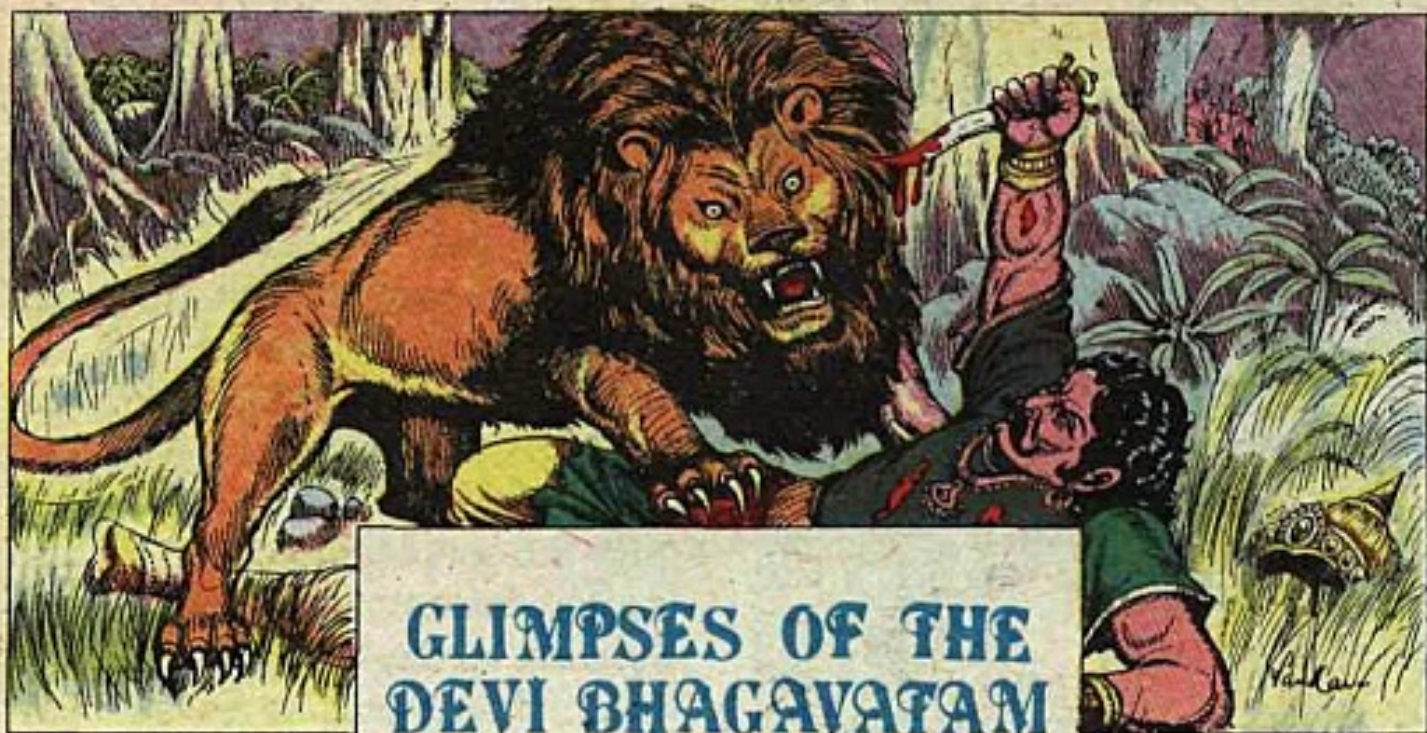
The Brahmin led it away to his home.

Shrikant could not eat for a full day and did not speak for two days. "What an excellent cow I gave away!" he murmured, sighing again and again.

## SPOT THE TEN DIFFERENCES







Long long ago a king named Dhruvasandhi ruled in the city of Ayodhya. He had two queens: Manorama and Lilavati. The two queens had two sons, Sudarshan and Shatrujit. Sudarshan, the son of Manorama, was older than Shatrujit by a month. But Shatrujit was better known among the people than Sudarshan. He freely mixed with the courtiers and officers and was liked by them.

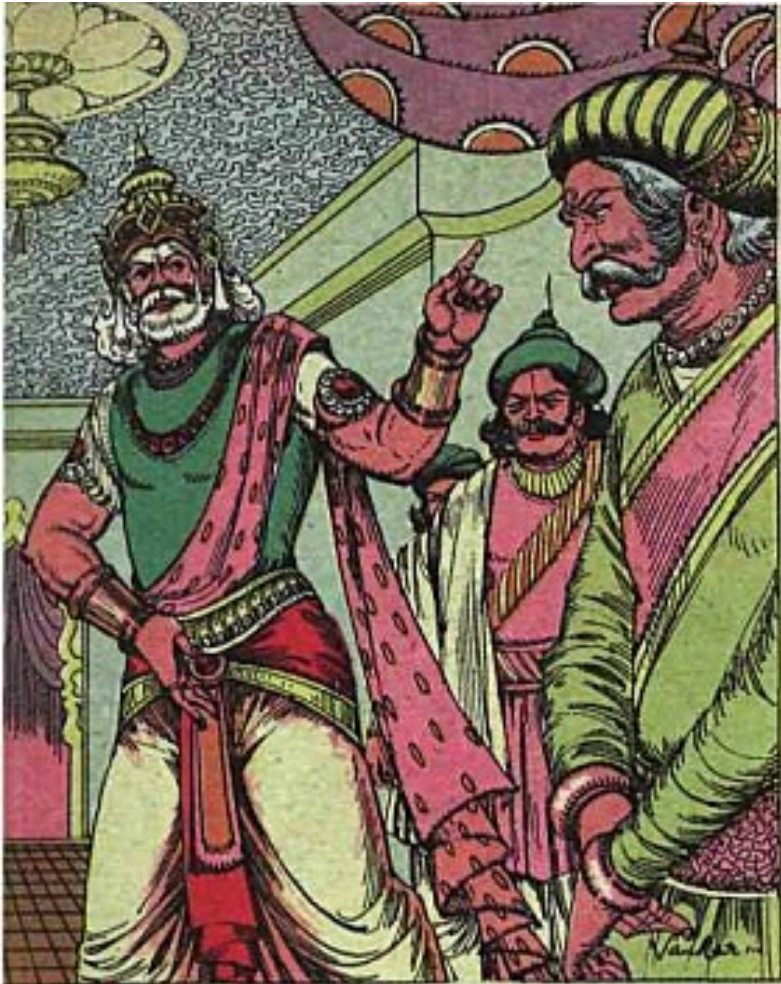
But this does not mean that Sudarshan was in any way inferior to his younger brother. Sudarshan was peace-loving and shy by nature. He did not like to mix with people and talk

much.

Once King Dhruvasandhi went for hunting. In the forest he was attacked by a lion. Both were locked in a terrible fight. The king succeeded in killing the lion, but in the process was badly mauled. He died before reaching the palace.

According to the custom as soon as the king dies his heir must ascend the throne. The ministers made hurried preparations for the coronation of Sudarshan. The sudden death of the king had shocked the queens. They were lying senseless. They did not know what the ministers were doing.





As soon as the news of the king's death reached them, Virsen, the father of Queen Manorama, and Yudhajit, the father of Queen Lilavati, arrived in Ayodhya. Each of the two kings took it upon himself to promote the interest of his grandson.

When Yudhajit saw that preparations were afoot to make Sudarshan the new king, he told Virsen, "Look here, friend, it is true that your grandson is one month older than my grandson. But Shatrujit, my grandson, is popular and clever. For the interest of the country we should shut our eyes to the

slight difference in age between them. I propose that Shatrujit be made the king."

Virsen laughed at the proposal and said, "I never expected such a strange opinion to come from you. Whatever be the difference in age the one who is older is to succeed his father to the throne. Sudarshan is not only the senior prince, he is also the son born to the senior queen. Besides, to the best of my knowledge, Sudarshan is in no way inferior to Shatrujit. In fact, I should think that Sudarshan is more serious, wise, and efficient."

King Yudhajit stopped arguing with King Virsen. Instead, looking at the ministers, he said, "I want my grandson Shatrujit to ascend the throne. I am sure that he deserves it more than Sudarshan who is just a month older than he. Do as I say. Otherwise you have to face the consequences."

King Virsen felt offended at King Yudhajit's threat. The two kings quarrelled. The coronation could not take place. The kingdom was plunged in a chaos. Taking advantage of the situation, bandits began plundering the cities.

Very soon the quarrel bet-



ween the two kings resulted in a battle. Virsen was killed by Yudhajit.

Queen Manorama was stunned at such a development.. She realised that her son's life and hers too were in danger. Since Yudhajit wanted to make his grandson Shatrujit king, he would not spare the rival's life.

Queen Manorama consulted a faithful minister named Vidalla.

"O Queen, your fear is well-founded. You and Prince Sudarshan can't live safely in Ayodhya. I propose, we depart for Kasi. The King of Kasi is my uncle. He is strong and prosperous. Let us seek shelter with him," said Vidalla.

Manorama agreed. With Prince Sudarshan, Minister Vidalla, and a maid she left the palace secretly. But, as luck would have it, a gang of bandits snatched away whatever wealth they were carrying with them. They crossed the Ganga and reached the Ashram of Sage Bharadwaj.

Minister Vidalla prostrated himself to the sage and told him all about the unfortunate queen and the prince. The sage came out and received the weeping queen with many words



of affection.

"My daughter, don't you worry. Your son, though exiled today, will one day become the king. Now continue to live in my hermitage without any fear or hesitation," the sage said further.

In a row of huts the queen set up her establishment. Days passed.

In Ayodhya Shatrujit's coronation took place with great pomp and show. Nobody knew where Queen Manorama and Prince Sudarshan were. But Yudhajit was a cautious man. He set spies to locate them. In due course it was reported to





him that the prince and the queen lived in the hermitage of sage Bharadwaj.

King Yudhajit marched towards the hermitage. Queen Manorama came to know of it and was full of fear on account of her son's life. But the sage reassured her of their safety.

Coming out of his hut the sage confronted the king "What business do you have with me?" asked the sage.

"I am looking for Queen Manorama," declared the king.

"I know why you are looking for her. She has lost her husband and her father. She is a refugee in my hermitage. Why

are you so inhuman as to pursue her and her son?" asked Bharadwaj.

"I am not prepared to answer you. Let the queen and her son surrender to me. Otherwise I will lead them away forcibly," replied the king.

The sage trembled with rage. "Do so if you can, you small man! Mad with your power and vanity you are under the delusion that you can terrify all! Are you so much of a fool to forget that there are far greater powers than the mundane powers?" blurted out the sage and he returned to his hut.

King Yudhajit got panicky at the sage's threat. He was in a dilemma. To let Sudarshan remain alive would mean to endanger the future of his grandson; on the other hand to annoy the sage further might mean catastrophe for himself and his grandson.

"My lord, it would not be wise to act in haste. Prince Sudarshan is very young. He has nobody to patronise him. We need not be afraid of him. He might perish in the forest. If he ever proves a menace to our young king, we can tackle the situation then," advised his minister.



King Yudhajit fell at the sage's feet and begged to be pardoned for his rude behaviour. Then he retreated. Queen Manorama heaved a sigh of relief.

Prince Sudarshan was taught by the sage. There were expert fighters in the forest living as the sage's disciples who taught him archery, wrestling and fencing.

But the prince was primarily a devotee of Mahadevi - a form of the Supreme Goddess. He prayed to Her to know the ultimate secret of the military art. One night in his dream he received the boon from the Goddess assuring him that the secret would be revealed to him spontaneously.

The king of Kasi had a beautiful daughter named Sasikala. Sudarshan heard much in her praise. It so happened that the princess too heard much about Sudarshan.

One day the tribal chieftain of Shrinagaverapur, on a visit to the forest, was so charmed by Sudarshan that he made him a gift of a handsome chariot loaded with weapons along with four horses.

When Sudarshan drove the chariot he felt immensely coura-



geous. He had also a feeling that as if thousands of soldiers marched with him, guarding him from all sides.

The sages visiting the Ashram used to tell the queen, "Mother, your son is destined to be crowned a king!"

"O holy ones, let your prophecy be true!" the queen used to say.

The king of Kasi convened a Swayamvara — an assembly of princes—for his daughter's marriage. The princess was required to choose her husband from among the invitees.

When Princess Sasikala heard the list of invitees from her





maids, she shed tears and said, "In vain have these suitors come here, for I will marry none of them!"

"Who then is your choice, O Princess?" asked the maids.

"Prince Sudarshan - living in exile in the forest," was Sasi-kala's reply.

The queen was reported about the choice of the princess. In her turn, the queen reported the matter to the king. The king was not happy. "How can I give my daughter in marriage to an exiled prince—who has

nothing to claim as his own? Besides, he is never safe. Today or tomorrow Shatrujit is likely to take steps to kill him," the king said with anguish.

The queen ran to the princess and pleaded with her to change her mind. "The princes we have invited are the gems among the eligible bridegrooms. Each one of them is an heir to a throne. Choose anyone and you would happily lead the life of a queen in the future," said her mother.

But the princess kept shedding tears in silence.

People so often play up the bad side of things.  
Nobody ever puts up a sign that says 'Nice Dog'.

- *Changing Times,*  
*The Kiplinger Magazine*



## THE STRANGE HOST



In the land of Eleusis lived Procrustes. From a hill-top near his house he kept watch on the long road.

When he saw a traveller he came down and stopped him and befriended him.



He took the traveller in and offered him food and rest. The traveller was happy.



Procrustes and his wife then led the guest to a cosy bed and suggested that he relax!







If the guest was found to be shorter than the bed, Procrustes and his wife stretched him so that he could enjoy the whole bed!

If the guest was found to be taller than the bed, then Procrustes chopped off his limbs so that he fitted to the bed.



Needless to say, they killed the guest anyway. They appropriated whatever the traveller was carrying with him.



It was a heroic prince, Theseus, while travelling, saw through the brigand's game and killed him.



navi 00



## Exploits of Uncle Luddoo

### HE HAD DONE IT ALREADY !

"I cut off both the legs of an enemy soldier in the battle," said a retired army officer to a small evening gathering in our town.

"I cut off the legs of two enemy soldiers," said the second officer, not to be outdone in boasting.

"Why did you not cut off their heads, officers?" a listener asked innocently.

Before the officers had put forward their explanations, Uncle Luddoo stood up and said, "I'll tell you why they did not. I had already cut off the heads of those enemy soldiers a little earlier."







## BUSINESS AT MIDNIGHT

Baburao was a money-lender. People pledged their various property to him and received money against them. They had to repay the loans with interest. Otherwise Baburao became the owner of the property pledged.

Baburao was fond of forwarding loans to clients of a particular category—the gamblers. A gambler who pledges his property was never heard of being able to get it released.

Baburao's estates went on expanding. Under his patronage gambling too was spreading.

Sensible people of the locality used to tell Baburao, "Is it right for you to encourage gambling? It has brought ruin to so many families!"

"I do not gamble myself; Money-lending is my business," used to be Baburao's reply.

"There is nothing wrong with lending money at reasonable interest. Who would object to your lending money to people who are in real need? What we suggest is, stop lending to the gamblers!" the people would plead with him.

"I don't give money to kids! Those who borrow from me are grown-up ones. What they do with the loan is their business," was Baburao's stock reply.

Suddenly the authorities banned gambling. Those who were found gambling were arrested. The people in general were happy with this situation, but Baburao felt extremely gloomy.

Kumar Chowdhury was the scion of a well-known family of landlords, belonging to another village. He used to borrow



from Baburao, pledging small parts of his estates. Baburao, in due course, came to own them.

Kumar Chowdhury had not been seen for a year. Then he knocked on Baburao's door one night. Baburao was happy.

"We are gambling at a secret place. Please give me ten thousand rupees. I have brought a document ready, pledging ten acres of my garden," said Kumar Chowdhury.

Now that Baburao had few clients, he was very happy to give the loan.

Kumar Chowdhury left with the money. Baburao followed

him stealthily. He desired to see where they gambled and who were the members of the gang.

Kumar Chowdhury left the village and reached the cremation ground. Near the ground stood a deserted house. He entered it.

Baburao peeped through the window. To his horror he saw that those with whom Kumar Chowdhury gambled were the people of his own village who had been dead for years! They were all known gamblers when alive.

He thought of warning Kumar Chowdhury that he was playing with ghosts! But he







refrained from doing so. That was because Kumar Chowdhury met him almost every night and borrowed more and more from him, pledging more estates and houses.

At last Kumar Chowdhury proposed that Baburao give him one lakh rupees more against everything he had!

Baburao was happy. He knew that everything Kumar Chowdhury had would amount to no less than ten lakhs in terms of money. The money changed hands. Baburao was left with no more cash, but he was still happy.

Next day Baburao, armed with all the documents, went to

Kumar Chowdhury's village to take possession of his estates.

"Kumar Chowdhury? He is dead since six months! Not an inch of his estates was free when he died!" said the villagers.

Baburao fainted at the realisation that he was dealing with a ghost for nights together. Thereafter also night after night Kumar Chowdhury's figure came gnashing his teeth at him.

Baburao spent the rest of his days in donating his property to temples, schools, and hospitals. At last he left the village in the company of a group of mendicants.

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## WHEN A RIVER WAS KILLED

The Persian King Cyrus was crossing the Gyndes, a big river that flowed through Iraq.

One of the royal horses—of which the king was quite fascinated—entered the river, but did not come out. It had been drowned.

What would have happened if a man had killed the royal horse? He would have been punished with death, of course! Why should the river be spared? This was the king's argument.

The king ordered death for the naughty river! Hundreds of small channels were dug to divert the river's flow in numerous directions. The flow in such small channels being weak, they dried up in the desert!

This was in 6th century B. C.





## PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



Mr. Brahmddev

Can you formulate a caption in a few words, to suit these pictures related to each other? If yes, you may write it on a post card and mail to Photo Caption Contest, Chandamama, to reach us by 20th of the current month. A reward of Rs. 25/- will go to the best entry which will be published in the issue after the next.

The prize for the April '81 goes to:

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The Winning Entry - 'Amusing Antics' - 'Amazing Gymnastics'

### PICKS FROM THE WISE

An adventure is only an inconvenience, rightly considered.

— G. K. Chesterson.

Only the wise possess ideas; the greater part of mankind are possessed by them.

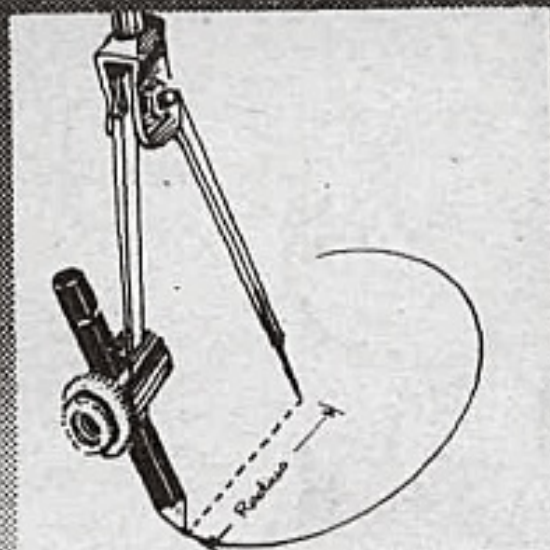
— S. T. Coleridge.

The worst use that can be made of success is to boast of it.

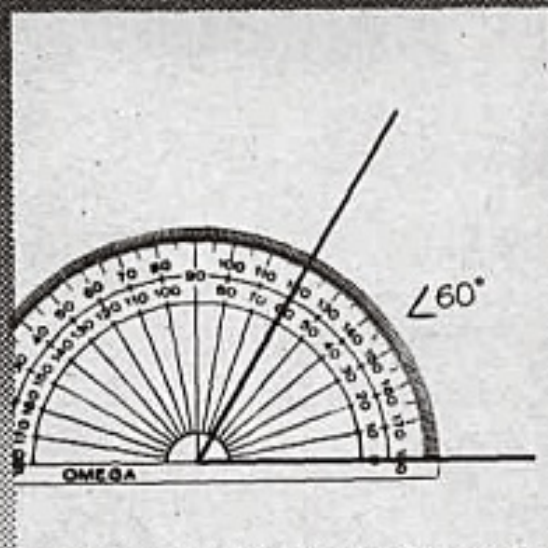
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